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Lucia A Keegan 08/29/2006 03:27:37 PM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 05763

SIPDIS  
cxparis:  
ACTION: POL  
INFO: AGR PAO AMB DAO ECON STRASBOU DCM FCS SCI ORA  
UNESCO ODC

DISSEMINATION: POLOUT  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: POL/MC:JROSENBLATT  
DRAFTED: POL:GRECINOS  
CLEARED: POL:BTURNER, DAO:MGUILLOT (INFO)

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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0770  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0434  
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0868

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 005763

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/28/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [KPKO](#) [UNSC](#) [LE](#) [FR](#)  
SUBJECT: LEBANON/UNIFIL UPDATE: FRANCE SORTING OUT DETAILS  
OF ITS SUPPORT

REF: PARIS 5668 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Political Minster-Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt, Reason 1.  
4 B/D

11. (C) Summary: French planners at the MOD and the MFA are meeting to assess how best to proceed with the deployment of French troops to Lebanon, as announced by President Chirac on August 24. With no specifics yet available on the composition of the deployment, as announced, the plan is to send a total of 2,000 troops in-country, with a mostly maritime, non UNIFIL force of 1,700, under French command, off-shore to provide support. France is sending a separate, bilateral force of some 100 engineers outside of the UNIFIL mandate area to assist with humanitarian reconstruction efforts -- bridge building and demining, for instance. Separately, France is studying U.S. suggestions to strengthen UNIFIL's rules of engagement (ROE) and the Concept of Operations (CONOPS).

12. (C) Politically, the GOF claims it is attempting to convince the Lebanese Government to ask UNIFIL to monitor the Syrian border, but without success so far. France sees the need for a new UNSC resolution and a sanctions committee to reinforce UNSCR 1701, Op 15 on the arms of Hizbollah, and is prepared to move forward accordingly. Further steps to sanction individuals or freeze funds would require yet another UNSCR. End summary.

Deployments

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¶3. (C) In discussions with MOD and MFA contacts, we have learned that in addition to the 2,000 troops to be deployed by France to the UNIFIL force in Lebanon, some 100 personnel, mostly engineers, were expected to arrive in-country on August 28 to provide humanitarian assistance outside the UNIFIL mandate area. Given their planned presence outside the UNIFIL area, these engineers will remain under French command, as opposed to being blue-hatted under UNIFIL. In response to our request for details, both the CHOD's office and civilians at the MOD noted that the composition of 1,600 additional French forces for UNIFIL has not yet been clarified, as force generation discussions are ongoing, but France's contribution likely would include infantry and armor detachments.

¶4. (C) The MOD said that, under current planning, no calls for assistance under ESDP or NATO are envisioned for now. Assistance requests, however, should they become necessary, likely would be made at the bilateral level.

ROE and CONOPS  
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¶5. (C) On August 28, we shared with the MOD and the MFA Department-provided suggestions for strengthening UNIFIL's rules of engagement and its concept of operations, which the GOF agreed to review and comment on.

Monitoring the Syria/Lebanon Border  
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¶6. (C) With respect to the implementation of UNSC 1701, the MFA observed that France is trying to convince the Government of Lebanon to ask UNIFIL to monitor the border, but without success so far, as obtaining ministerial agreement for such a request has not been possible. In the meantime, an MOD contact noted that France has cautioned Lebanon that it (Lebanon) and Syria are responsible for monitoring their common border. (Note: In informal discussion with our military contacts, we heard an unconfirmed report that India might pull out its troops, currently assigned to a sector adjacent to Syria, out of UNIFIL.)

Next steps at the UNSC  
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¶7. (C) France is focused on setting up a sanctions committee to monitor implementation of UNSCR 1701 as a means, at a minimum, of sending a "political message to Syria." To do so would require a second UNSC resolution. France believes this resolution could be passed without significant debate, since it would refer back to UNSCR 1701, Ops 15, which France views as legally binding. This new UNSCR would create new obligations based on the more general obligations under UNSCR 1701. The GOF views such a resolution as falling under Chapter 7, since arms smuggling clearly poses a threat to international peace and security. During an initial stage, the committee would not/not be able to impose sanctions on individuals or freeze funds; doing that would require a third UNSCR. The French view the committee as a political instrument, not a coercive one.

¶8. (C) On timing, France is ready to move quickly on a second UNSCR to set up the sanctions committee. It is important, in the French view, not/not to move too quickly on a third UNSCR, however, since at present the Lebanese government would be unable to go along. The French see the push for a second resolution as the "beginning of a process, taking into account the political context in Lebanon."

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